

## Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09ABUJA202, NIGERIA: SARAHI ON PRESIDENT'S HEALTH, NEED FOR

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09ABUJA202**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09ABUJA202</a>	<a href="#">2009-02-04 14:55</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Abuja</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.spiegel.de>

VZCZCXRO2813  
PP RUEHPA  
DE RUEHUJA #0202/01 0351455  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 041455Z FEB 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5175  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1638  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY 0612  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 0748  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000202

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA  
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [KCOR](#) [TBIO](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: SARAKI ON PRESIDENT'S HEALTH, NEED FOR

ACTION ON PRIORITIES IN 2009, APPOINTMENT OF FORMER NFIU CHIEF TO GOVERNOR'S FORUM

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador met with Kwara State Governor and President of the Governor's Forum (GF) Bukola Saraki on January 28. Saraki was his usual self, discussing President Yar'Adua's health situation and his own attempt to resolve some of the EFCC's issues by appointing the former NFIU Chief as Director General of the GF. He also noted that he had followed through on the framework for stemming polio outbreaks that the Ambassador had given to him in December 2008 to share with the 36 governors. (NOTE: The Ambassador had provided the interagency points on what states needed to do better to address polio in Nigeria.) Saraki continues to maintain that Yar'Adua does not have lung cancer and noted that he is less fatigued and breathing better than in September 2008. Saraki told me Yar'Adua recognizes the need to take visible action on his seven point agenda in 2009, as January 2010 will see the beginning of political maneuvering for the 2011 elections. Saraki put the recent reconciliation between former President Obasanjo and former VP Atiku in the context of preparations for the 2011 elections. He again thanked Ambassador for a presentation on polio sent by the Mission and noted that the governors agreed to work to eradicate polio in their respective states under the umbrella of the "Make Your State Polio Free" campaign. END SUMMARY.

Saraki comments on yar'adua's health

¶2. (C) On the President, Saraki began by saying Yar'Adua will remain in Abuja the week of January 26 and plans to travel to Katsina and other areas of Nigeria the next week. He holds to his view (as a medical doctor) that Yar'Adua is chronically ill, suffering from kidney disease, but maintains that he knows of no plans to go to Germany for treatment and does not believe he has lung cancer or is in need of a kidney transplant at this time. Saraki said Yar'Adua wanted to go out of Nigeria with his family for vacation, but was concerned that international travel would be perceived as another medical trip, so decided to stay in Nigeria to allay any fears. Regarding Yar'Adua's health in general, Saraki said that Yar'Adua suffers from less fatigue and shortness of breath than he had in September 2008, and has not had a major episode since returning to Nigeria from his September trip to Saudi Arabia, implying that his medical regime has given him some relief.

¶3. (C) NOTE: In a January 27 meeting, Shell Petroleum Vice President for Africa Anne Pickard noted to Ambassador that xxxxxxxxxxxx the German construction and transport company Julius Berger xxxxxxxxxxxx provide transportation to and from Germany for doctors looking after Yar'Adua, as well as helps ship medical equipment to Abuja.

Yar'adua realizes need to act in 2009

¶4. (C) Saraki asked the Ambassador (given her recent trip back) how Nigeria is being viewed in the U.S. these days. Ambassador noted that there was still concern that there was not more movement on Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda, nor concrete steps to improve the Niger Delta situation and the lack of movement on the anti-corruption fight remains at the top of the list. Saraki said he discussed this with Yar'Adua and that Yar'Adua realized he needs to move faster and no longer has the liberty to be as deliberative as his nature might dictate. Saraki said that he and Yar'Adua are of like minds in seeing 2009 as a "make or break" year. In January 2010, political camps within the PDP will already be formulating their positions on candidates for the 2011 election and it would be harder for Ministers and others to take any bold actions as they seek their godfathers for 2011. Ambassador asked Saraki if he thought the PDP would support Yar'Adua for another term, if he so desired. Saraki said he did not know, noting there are already others interested (i.e., Atiku) who

will also be working the party members. Saraki said he did not know and has not received any signal from Yar'Adua regarding his plans for 2011.

Abuja 00000202 002 of 002

Saraki on obasanjo-atiku meeting

15. (C) Saraki maintained that former President Obasanjo and former VP Atiku were having a "lovefest" in order to prepare for the 2011 elections. Asked about internal machinations within the PDP lately, which clearly have the governors on one side and politicians like Obasanjo and Atiku on the other, Saraki said this was the case and he expected things to continue in this vein as people begin to decide who they are going to back for the 2011 election. Saraki said Atiku would officially be coming back into the PDP in March 2009.

Gov's forum to put efcc back on track

16. (C) Saraki said he is trying to work behind the scenes getting the issues surrounding the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission "back on track." He maintained this was the motivation behind hiring former Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) Director Ashishano Bayo Okauru as Director General of the Governor's Forum (announced publicly on January 27). Saraki said Okauru is not/not being pursued on corruption nor national security grounds and neither is there an arrest pending on him. According to Saraki, Okauru has worked out his "resignation issues." (COMMENT: Given previous EFCC focus on the Saraki family, we are skeptical of the Governor's comments as he has a vested interest in the EFCC taking its spotlight off his family. END COMMENT.)

State-level polio eradication campaigns

17. (C) Saraki said the governors were appreciative of the polio presentation the Ambassador sent to the Governors' Forum in December, noting the attendance of Ministry of Health officials at the forum. The governors agreed to a campaign to make their states polio-free and report on polio issues at each GF meeting. Further developments will be reported septel.

18. (C) COMMENT: Although Saraki is very plugged in with President Yar'Adua and holds a lot of political sway with many governors, particularly in the north, we always need to weigh his motives with the information he provides in one-on-one meetings. He certainly sees himself as a potential political candidate at sometime and sees Yar'Adua as one of his best vehicles to get there. On the other hand, he clearly has fears about the Obasanjo-Atiku reunion as they would be a more difficult faction of the PDP to control.

19. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.  
SANDERS